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Nukuleka

KINSHIP ORGANISATION AND BEHAVIOUR IN A CONTEMPORARY TONGAN VILLAGE

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Preface

This is a descriptive study on the kinship organisation and behaviour of Tongan commoners in a contemporary Tongan village. It will discuss the following questions. 1. Within what kind of kinship network do people live in a rural area of Tonga today? 2. How do they behave in such a network?

Kinship in Tonga has been variously described in the literature. According to G. P. Murdock[1] the Tongans are classified as an extended family type with polygamous household; patrilocal residence, but matrilocal residence as a patterned alternative; limited polygymy; absence of any unilinear kin groups; bilateral kindred; cross cousin marriage is disapproved symmetrically but not specifically forbidden. In these characteristics we do not find any particular kin group except kindred. But, on the other hand, R. Firth,[2] and others,[3] discuss the *ha'a* which is called an optataive descent group or sept or ramage.[4] According to their definition the *ha'a* is not of a kindred type but resembles a lineage in several ways. Are there, then, two types of kin group in Tonga? If there are two, how do they work together? Through the intensive study of a small village, I will try to clarify the above point.

I stayed in the Kingdom of Tonga from July 1962 to February 1963, and the field work for this paper was done in Nukuleka village from November 1962 to January 1963. Nukuleka is located in the eastern part

1. Murdock 1967: 681.
2. Firth 1957: 6.
3. Davenport 1959: 562.
4. Sahlins 1958: 139-159.